

AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
HAPPINESS AND ADVANTAGES
OF A
WELL-ORDERED FAMILY,
RESPECTING
THE PRESENT AND FUTURE WELFARE
OF ITS MEMBERS.

WITH AN APPENDIX, &c. &c.

EXTRACTED FROM
AN ANCIENT WRITER ON THIS SUBJECT.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR P. AND C. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M.DCC.XCIV.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

OF NATURAL HISTORY

AND MINERALOGY

OF THE

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LONDON

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ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

1800

TO THE
HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

S H U T E,

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

AN apology for the liberty I am now taking, in giving this little Work, (without your Lordship's knowledge) the honour of your name, in order to its currency and credit, would argue an ignorance of the real piety of your Lordship's character, and a distrust of the foundation on which the arguments stand, which are urged in the following pages.

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I do not pretend, my Lord, that it is an original Work; but the uncouth form in which I found it, with a century of years upon its head, has made it necessary to bestow nearly as much time and pains upon it, as it would have required to produce an inferior composition of my own on the subject. Your Lordship's eye, notwithstanding all my care, will, I doubt not, discover, now and then, some marks of its antiquity; but you will not regret, that so serious an exhortation to a sadly-neglected duty has been drawn forth from a state of obscurity, though it should not appear with every possible advantage.

Your Lordship, I am sure, will agree with me in thinking, that if the arguments here made use of could produce conviction, a very satisfactory change might soon be expected to take place,
through

through the re-establishment of domestic piety: and thereby would the morals of a very numerous and powerful description of persons be gradually reformed, who, if suffered to continue in unbelief, and without religious principles, would add no inconsiderable portion to the stock of general depravity.

The objects to whom this little treatise refers are various, and all of them are peculiarly interesting. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, are here addressed, and affectionately called upon to consider, how they may best discharge the duties of their respective relations; that so, in the *microcosm* of a well-ordered family, every department may be properly filled, order and regularity may be preserved, and a due subordination may prevail; resting on the only sure foundation of peace and tranquillity, THE FEAR OF GOD.

That your Lordship's family is such as is here described, is perfectly well known to those who have the happiness of admission into it. Within those walls, it is found by experience that the present comfort and eternal happiness of every individual are regarded and promoted; from the faithful veteran, disabled by age or accident, down to the ignorant and illiterate stripling; whom your Lordship (greatly indeed to your honour) thinks it neither a waste of your time, nor an impeachment of your learning and abilities, occasionally to instruct in the principles of that religion, which prescribes *humility* to the *elevated*, *contentment* to the *depressed*, and a *due concern* for a *blest eternity*, to ALL.

Thus patronized and protected, may this little manual find its way, first, into the hands of the Clergy, in none of whose

whose families, I trust, this duty is neglected; and, by their means, to those of the Laity, and thence to their families and dependants. Thus will it, through the divine blessing, be made the instrument of reviving and restoring the unfashionable practice of family-devotion, until every Christian house shall become an house of prayer; and till God shall be more generally *feared*, and *worshipped*, and his Name *shall be had in reverence* by all that profess and call themselves Christians,

I have the honour to be, with the sincerest respect,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most dutiful,

Most devoted, and

Most humble Servant,

THE EDITOR.

whole families, I trust, this duty is neglected, and, by their means, to those of the family, and hence to their families and dependants. Thus will it, through the divine blessing, be made the instrument of reviving and restoring the unimpaired practice of family devotion, and every Christian should feel bound to come an advocate of prayer, and till God shall be more generally acknowledged, and his name shall be duly revered by all that profess and call themselves Christians.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most dutiful,

Most devoted, and

Most humble servant,

THE EDITOR.

AN
E S S A Y, &c.

THERE is not a more common subject of complaint than the growing corruption of manners, and the prevalency of immorality and irreligion among us. We must shut our eyes, and stop our ears, if we are not acquainted with it. Who is not sensible of the justice and truth of this complaint? All serious people profess to bewail the want of reformation; and many are apprehensive of impending judgments upon that account. But what hope of a *National Reformation*; if it begin not in *Families*? If they, who have the care and government of these lesser societies, will not faithfully do their part; neither magistrates, nor ministers, can expect success in doing theirs.

B

Nations

Nations will be wicked, and churches will be corrupt, and cities will abound with all manner of impurity; if particular families, out of which the members are all composed, be disordered and irregular.

No wonder if they who are not taught the knowledge and fear of God betimes, should run into atheism and debauchery as they grow up. That so many are thus corrupted in principles and conversation, must needs be in a great measure owing to the neglect and miscarriage of parents and heads of families. Reformation must therefore begin in the houses of individuals. The Psalmist began that in his own family, which he designed should reach to his whole kingdom*.

Is it strange if they who have lived many years in families wherein God was not worshipped, where there was little or no concern about religion, (it may be not so much as the form and the shew of it) is it strange if they

* Psalm ci.

they should be ignorant and careless, dissolute and profane, when they come to have families of their own? if they should be as little solicitous for the souls under their care, as their own parents and masters were of *theirs*, during their minority or service? If there should be no reading the Holy Scriptures, no instructing of children and servants, no prayer and praise offered to God in the family; how unlikely is it that they who are brought up in their youth in such houses should afterwards be exemplary for religion in their own!

It depends more upon parents and masters to recover, and preserve, serious godliness in the world, than either upon the Civil Magistrate, or the most diligent and faithful Ministers of Christ, in their places. And whence can we hope for any useful *magistrates*, or *faithful ministers*, if they are not formed to be capable of being *such*, by the wise and good instructions of holy parents, and the blessing of God thereupon, in their tender years? It is certain they are

likely to profit little by the preaching of the Word, if their minds are not prepared by the instructions of parents and masters at home, in comparison of others who have had that advantage. One great reason why people do not better understand sermons, and profit more by them, is, because they never well understood their catechism.

It is in vain therefore to talk against the badness of the times, and the licentiousness of the age, unless you will resolve that reformation shall begin at home, and unless every one is at the pains to reform his own little family.

Thence it is that wickedness spreads and diffuses itself over a whole kingdom. One ignorant or wicked family may do much to corrupt, defile, and destroy, several others, when the branches thereof are separated:—as when a son goes into one family, and a daughter into another, and a servant into a third; they carry and communicate their evil principles, customs, and prejudices, to the infection of
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of others. It cannot reasonably be expected that persons, when they come abroad into the world, should ordinarily prove better than their education: but a religious family is a diffusive blessing, which, like a stock of bees, sends forth swarms and a supply of honey into neighbouring parts. This, especially, is seen, when the members hereof come afterwards to have families of their own. To shut religion, therefore, out of families, or not promote it in them, is the means to thrust it out of the world.

This has been observed by the very Heathens, as the proper way for a private man to be a public blessing, and serviceable to the welfare of his country, viz. *by ordering things well at home*, with wisdom and care, in his own house and family. And there is hardly any thing whereby so much evil is done to the public, as by the carelessness of parents as to the instruction of their children, and the negligence or ill examples of masters with respect to their servants. Among some of the Heathens, a penalty was laid upon

the parents, when the children were ill conditioned; and they might be sued in the courts of judicature, if they neglected the education of their children.

How much the safety, pleasure and comfort of our lives, depend upon the faithful discharge of relative duties, experience will teach us. What greater comfort can a parent or a master have, than to see the success of his endeavours for the good of those under his roof? A natural parent may say, as well as a spiritual one, *I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth.* It is said of Abraham *, that he dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, *Heirs with him of the same promise.* How comfortable is it when father, son, and grandson, are all heirs of the same promised salvation! especially if God bless our endeavours towards it, that they who come from our loins may serve the Lord. There is a double blessing where the son inherits the piety of the father. To see

* Heb. xi. 9.

see them alive to God, who were dead in sin, will revive the heart of a religious parent, as it did old Jacob's to know that his son Joseph was *alive*. To have a wife and children bear the image of God, and our servants to obey, and serve, and please their heavenly master; and by our faithfulness, and care, and diligence, to be brought to know, and love, and worship, and honour him, and to be accepted with him; what an unspeakable delight must this be! when the favour of Religion descends from the head to all the members of the family, as the precious ointment, poured on the head of Aaron, ran down to the skirts of his garments. We then may and shall love them with a higher kind of love than bare natural affection.

In short, we shall *love* our husbands, wives, and children, and holy relations, with *another sort of love* than other persons do theirs. It is a more fervent, more pure, more faithful, more comfortable love, which is superadded

by religion, and results from their love to God, and participation of his image. We shall love them, as the friends and brethren of Christ, as heirs of the same inheritance, as begotten again to a divine life by the same spirit, as born of the same immortal seed of the Word, as nourished by the same spiritual food, as under the same bond of the covenant, as of one household of faith, as soldiers under the same colours and banner of Christ, as called to the same blessed hope of the Gospel, as travellers to the same heavenly country, and coheirs of the same glorious everlasting kingdom. We cannot love our unsanctified relations in this manner, whatever natural or civil bonds of union there may be between us and them. It will please us, doubtless, to see them thrive and prosper in the world whom we tenderly love; but it must much more do so, to see them faithful to God, live to his glory, and be prepared for heaven. Whether we live or die, we may then comfortably resign them, and trust them with God, who loves them better than

than we do, and will be sure to take care of them. With what pleasure can we think of the sin and misery which they escape! What wickedness such a child might otherwise have committed on earth! and what punishments he must have endured hereafter, if he had been wicked! Their love, honour, and obedience to us, (which the grace of God will teach them) will also add to our joy; in our health, and sickness, or old age, they will pray for us. And if they die, we can look forward to the everlasting happiness of their souls, as well as our own, and the hopes of meeting them with comfort in the day of reckoning.

And what an honour is it to any family, to have a serious sense of religion transmitted from father to son, and from the son to the grand-child? Pliny observes it was counted a great honour and felicity, that in one Roman family there were three successive Presidents of the Senate, and in one house three Orators, one after another.

Besides

Besides, how beautiful and pleasant a thing is a religious well-ordered family! How comfortable is it to dwell in such an house! where God is worshipped, his name revered, and his day sanctified, his word read, his authority acknowledged, and his laws made the rule of conduct! where it is an honour, and not a reproach, to eschew evil, and do good! God promises to bless the habitations of the just; and how gracious will his presence be unto such! Whereas, to live in a house where the name of God is never used but in jest or in scorn, or profanely; where the inhabitants appear to live from day to day, as if they had no souls to save, no world but this to regard, and no expectation beyond the grave; where worldly-mindedness and sensuality, foolish talking, and intemperance, &c. have infected superiors and inferiors—who, alas! could dwell with comfort in such a house? Peace and union, love and concord, cannot generally prevail in such men's dwellings. Family-jars, contentions, and sorrows, are occasioned by

by sin, which family-religion would do much to prevent and cure.

If children are a grief to their parents, and thorns in their eyes (as a wicked son is the calamity and shame of his father, and heaviness to his mother) they may too often thank themselves; especially if they did not with love and diligence, with wisdom and faithfulness, seek to promote their salvation. If servants neglect their duty to their masters, how can they wonder when they have neglected theirs to them? They must bear the fruit of their sin, if they have not taught them the principles of religion, which would have made them better; and if they have not encouraged them to keep a conscience void of offence by their own example. But if their endeavours should not succeed for their servants conversion and salvation, they will at least have the satisfaction of reflecting that they had done what they could towards it; whereas, without such endeavours, it must be an afflictive thought, when any of
them

them die, or when they themselves depart, to consider that they did no more to promote their eternal happiness and salvation.

Moreover, what evidence can we have of our own piety and sincerity towards God, if we do not thus endeavour to advance the spiritual and eternal good of those under our charge? Abraham commanded his children and his household after him, that they should fear the Lord. Joshua resolves to engage all his house to serve the true God with him: he, though a general, and a great man, did not think it beneath him to own religion before all the world, and endeavour to promote it. He would not serve the true God *alone*, if he could prevail with others to join with him: he proposed his own example to the whole nation; and that, as far as in him lay, all his family at least should be religious. Cornelius was a devout man, and feared God with all his house. We may, without being uncharitable, suspect the soundness of their religion, who are unconcerned for the spreading

spreading of it in their families. How is it consistent with faithfulness to their own souls, to have little or no care concerning those of others? If we are negligent in using the means for their salvation, we shake the ground of hope concerning our own.

Family prayer and instruction, and the holy examples of good men in their houses, is one of the *first means* which God commonly makes use of to convince, and turn, and sanctify such as were ignorant and carnal. At least, education making the first impression on their minds, whatever change may be afterwards made by careless conversation, somewhat of the first good tincture is found very frequently to abide.

Ordinarily I say, through the blessing of God, this may be hoped for; though it must be confessed, that where the advantages of education are disregarded, it is observed that too many of the children and servants who have been bred in good families prove no better

better than others. If they have forsaken God, we must not wonder if God should *forsake them, and cast them off for ever.* It is a judicial act in God, when children cast off the God of their fathers. If they turn apostates, they many times run deeper into sin, and further from God than others, as Cain, Ham, Ishmael, Esau, Eli's sons, Absalom, yea Solomon, Rehoboam, Manasseh; and few comparatively recovered. The light and means against which they sin, provokes God to abandon them. Upon the same grounds we may give an account, why there are more Atheists in such places, where the Christian religion is professed, and the power of it rejected, than among any other sort of men, even than there were among the Heathens themselves. Their hearts are judicially hardened, and their eyes blinded. And the contempt of Gospel Light will beget, and leave on the mind such a depraved corrupt habit, as cannot but incline unto the worst of evils*. And as all *Atheism* springs from a *resolution* not to see things

* 2 Pet. ii. 21.

things eternal ; wherever men are resolved not to see, the greater the light is which shines about them, the faster they must close their eyes. It is not therefore to the *disparagement*, but *honour* of the Gospel, that so many avow themselves to be *Atheists* in those places where the truth of it is known and professed : for none can have any inclination thereto, till they have rejected the Gospel, which immediately exposeth them to the worst of evils. They take shelter from their fears in downright *Atheism*, which alone pretends to give them security against the light of divine revelation. And what means can be used for the recovery of such ? The most rational arguments to prove the being and existence of God, may be of good use to expose and put to shame their foolish pretences. But men under the power of atheistical thoughts, are insnared into them by a desire to live securely in sin ; and no arguments from reason are like to prove an effectual cure to the predominant love of sin, and an habitual course of it, where men have re-
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jected the means and motives unto that end declared in Divine Revelation.

Parents however have sufficient encouragement to hope for success in their faithful endeavours: there are many that can speak of God, and praise him as their fathers God from age to age. If they neglect their duty to children (which is ordinarily the reason why so many miscarry), they cannot challenge God for not performing his covenant-promise, but must condemn themselves. But whatever the success may be, every parent, and head of a family, is obliged to honour God, and promote religion, and do what good he can for the souls of others within his sphere.

Thus all in their several places are bound to endeavour, as they have opportunity. We must be faithful to Christ and his interest in every relation, and in every capacity. If we are obliged to serve and worship God, as private persons; by virtue of the same dedication

cation of ourselves to him, we are bound to serve and honour him *in every relation*, as husbands, parents, masters, and heads of families, in every state and condition, according to our capacity. By family prayer and worship God hath greater honour, than by secret prayer; though therein we may more particularly and largely express the state of our own souls.

Of how great consequence then, to the *eternal salvation or ruin of souls*, is our care or unfaithfulness herein! How can we serve the cause of infidelity more effectually, than by the neglect of our duty to those under our roof? since, without giving them assistance to a holy life, they will have continual temptations to sin. In that house wherein God is not served, honoured, and worshipped, the interest of our spiritual enemy will surely prevail. And since our children and dependants have an everlasting happiness to attain, and endless misery to escape, they will have little reason to thank us for what-

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ever else we can teach them, or do for them, if we do not instruct and assist them in *this*, their most important concern.

It might be hoped, that if parents did their part in the use of God's first-appointed means to sanctify their children, he would usually bless their endeavours to their eternal benefit. And when serious religion once prevails in a family, it has been observed, for our encouragement, that ordinarily the grace of God doth not soon leave it: though there may be some sad interruption, yet it appears many times again in grandchildren and great-grandchildren; as in the seed of good Jehosaphat and others. So that by this means we may transmit religion to posterity, from generation to generation, as sin is propagated from father to son, and from one wicked family diffused to many others: and we perpetuate our own name and honour too; for godly children occasion their parents to be remembered with esteem and reverence. By beholding Timothy's piety, the Apostle

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is reminded of his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also* *. The piety and care of holy women is recorded with honour: *Behold, a certain Disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek* †.

Such is the singular usefulness of the holy government of families to reform the world, and destroy the kingdom and interest of the devil; that there is hardly any thing against which he suggests more objections, or more evasions and excuses to extenuate the neglect of our duty, or persuade us it is none, than in this case. One of the most common and prevailing cavils is this—that if they bring their children and servants to the public worship, to be taught by the minister, there

* 2 Tim. i. 5. † Acts, xvi. 1.

is no positive, express scripture for the worship of God in their families, to call them together, pray with them, and read the Scriptures, &c.

But in how many other cases is it granted, that the want of a positive express command will not conclude such or such a thing to be no duty? The baptism of infants, the sanctification of the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, the admission of women to the Lord's Table, and other instances may be given, which may be proved to be matter of duty, without positive express command. The Apostle is said to confound the Jews dwelling at Damascus, *proving out of the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ**: it must have been by the harmony of the Holy Scriptures, and by deductions from express texts; for he did not bring any one particular scripture out of the Old Testament, to prove in so many letters, that Jesus was the Christ. Nor did our Lord, in his proof of the resurrection of the dead

* Acts ix. 21.

dead against the Pharisees, out of the Old Testament *. There are no such words as the *resurrection of the dead* mentioned in that passage, from which he proves it. *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*

It is an argument of a very perverse mind, to insist so much upon positive scriptural proof of that as our duty, which must be acknowledged to be so much for our benefit and advantage, and for the public good.

There is reason enough to believe that they who pretend that there is no *express scripture* for this kind of duty, would little mind it, if there were ever so many, and those ever so express; for if men were true to God and their own souls, in those things for which we have the most positive, and express, and repeated authority of the Holy Scriptures, they would not raise such a scruple. There is an express command to repent of sin, and to believe in Christ, and to make our calling and election sure; to

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* Mat. xxii. 37.

redeem our time, and walk circumspectly; to do good unto all; to pray every where; and all sorts of prayer; and in every calling, station, and relation, therein to abide with God; to live by faith upon the invisible world; to prepare to die, and to remember the judgment seat of Christ, before which we must be made to stand, to answer for all we have received and done in the body, &c. there are *express scriptures* about these things: and did we believe them, remember them, and obey them, we should soon see reason and evidence sufficient for all that duty of worshipping God, and promoting religion in our families, which I would now recommend.

I will not urge the example of our Saviour Christ, in praying with his disciples; though much may be gathered from his pattern, as having a family whereof he was the master, and his twelve apostles members. We read of his instructing them, praying with them, and praising God by singing together, &c. But I will not lay too much stress on this example; because though our blessed Lord

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did occasionally pray with his disciples, as we find in several places of the gospel-history, yet his case and ours are vastly different. What was suitable for his disciples, was not proper for him. He could not ordinarily be their mouth in prayer for what they daily needed: he could not for himself ask the forgiveness of sin, and the mortification of lust, and the increase of grace, &c.

But there is enough from the holy scriptures to convince those that will seriously consider it, of the duty of *family religion*, and prayer as a part of it. For instance, we read of Joshua, that he resolves for himself and family, *I and my house will serve the Lord*:—that is, the men who dwelt with him in his house. And we read of Cornelius *, that *he was a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed always*. He was a Roman captain over the Italian band which attended the Roman Governor's person as his life-guard, and therefore probably

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Acts, x. 2.

of that nation. This Cornelius is said to be a devout man. Whether he were a profelyte to the church of Israel or no, is doubtful: be sure, not a *profelyte of the Covenant*, or of *Justice*, for such were circumcised. If he were an uncircumcised profelyte, or a *profelyte of the gate*, he was not incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel. The apostle Peter had a vision first to authorise him to go to him; and the Christians of the circumcision expressed their resentment for his conversation with him, till they knew his warrant, *Acts xi. 3*. Yet this Roman, this soldier, this centurion, was accepted of God, as being prepared to believe in Christ, as soon as he should be revealed to him. He was a devout and good man; and not only good himself, but chose such to be in his family, as feared God. He was full of good works, and constant in prayer: and God testified his acceptance of him: *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God*, verse 4. *Of a truth I perceive*, says the Apostle, *that God is no respecter of persons; but*

but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, verſe 39. Here is a ſurpriſing example of a devout ſoldier, a devout Roman, ſpreading religion in his family; one that *feared God with all his houſe, and prayed always.* The fear of God is an uſual expreſſion, comprehensive of all divine worſhip.* Let all the earth worſhip him.† Let all the earth fear him.‡ And prayer being the principal part of it, we may ſuppoſe, that as he *feared God*, and all his houſe, ſo he *prayed* with all his houſe unto God. And he himſelf ſeems ſo to explain it, *I prayed to God in mine houſe at the ninth hour*; or with *my houſehold*, as it may be rendered. He afterwards called together his kindred, and his near friends, when Peter came; but mentions not the calling of his houſehold, as what was uſual and ſuppoſed.

And the praying *always*, or continually, can hardly bear a leſs ſenſe, than the doing of it every

* 2 Kings xvii. 36, 37.

† Pſal. lxvi. 4.

‡ Pſal. lxvii. 7.

every day; as the *daily sacrifice* which God appointed the Jews, is called *the continual sacrifice*, which was offered morning and evening.* So Mephibosheth is said to eat bread at the King's table *continually*,† that is, at meal-time every day. Nature and Scripture both seem to concur to recommend *morning* and *evening* as the proper season for prayer. *It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises to thy name, O most high; to shew forth thy loving-kindness every morning, and thy faithfulness every night.‡* God is to be worshipped by all persons, and all people,|| and by social worship.§ The general nature of divine worship, and all the essentials of it, are found in the worship of God by *families, as such*. The object, the end, and the rule, is the same.

And since there are many commands in Scripture concerning divine worship, and this

* Dan. viii. 11. || Psal. xxii. 27, 28. Psal. lxvi. 4.

† 2 Sam. ix. 7. § Psal. xxxiv. 3. Acts xii. 12.

‡ Psal. xcii. 1, 2.

this part of it, *prayer* in particular, which are of general extent, such as of *praying always*, and giving thanks *always*; and *continuing in prayer and thanksgivings with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, every where lifting up holy hands, in every thing giving thanks, &c.* it will be hard to obey all these commands, and yet live in the neglect of family prayer. For common sense will lead us to determine the performance of this duty, to be *every day*, as a proper time, and in *every house*, as a proper place for it. But if it were only *permitted* us, we are greatly wanting to our own interest if we neglect it. These general rules and precepts do *at least* warrant, and make lawful, our *praying together* every day. We have leave to pray together, and shall we not use it? What if God should have forbidden us; if he should put any of our families under an *interdict*; and say, "You shall not pray to me; I will not receive a sacrifice from you. Your neighbours may pray to me every morning and night; I'll hear them, and accept them. As for you, you shall

shall have no family-altar, or sacrifice." Who would not be grieved to be deprived of such a daily privilege? who would not then use it, if they might? And because the evening and morning make one day, as the beginning and the end comprehend the whole; he that prays every *morning* and *evening*, may be said to pray *continually*, to pray *always*, to pray *without ceasing*.

Doth not a firm belief in the being of God, and the immortality of the soul, oblige us to endeavour the good of those in our families? and as one proper means of their spiritual welfare, doth it not of course direct the master of a family to pray with them; there being *family-sins* to be confessed by us, and forgiven by God; there being many *temptations* every day to be resisted, *wants* to be supplied, *duties* performed, *graces* exercised, *crasses* prevented, *mercies* acknowledged, &c. in families, as such: with respect to all which, family prayer and worship is an excellent means.

Some

Some of those who had not the advantage of Scripture-revelation, have yet had *their household-Gods*. The eastern nations had their *Teraphim*; the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, had their *Lares* and *Penates*, a sort of family-gods, to rule, preserve, and defend them in their houses; whom they worshipped, and sacrificed unto in their houses: and several of them had a particular room set apart for an *oratory* to that purpose. The heathen poets, Hesiod, Homer, and others, mention their *daily sacrifices* to their Gods *every morning* and *evening*, that they might prosper, and succeed by their favour in all their affairs; and their practice may be urged for our *conviction*. It seems a prescription of the law of nature, that every society wherein men unite, according to the will of God, should own their dependance on him, by some worship common to that society and as performed in the name of it; especially is it so, as to *an household or family*, which is the foundation of all other societies. Hence there were sacrifices pecu-

liar to *families* before the law, wherein the father of the family was the sacred administrator. So Job offered burnt-offerings for himself and family,* and Jacob for his.† And such family-sacrifices were famous among the heathens. And shall they out-do us? shall they be sensible of their dependance in their families on some superior aid, so as to worship stocks and stones in their houses, rather than have no worship at all? and shall Christians live contentedly without the worship of the true God in their families? *All people will walk every one in the name of his God; and shall not we resolve to walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever? †*

In short, If God be the founder, the owner, the governor and benefactor of *families*; if such little societies be of his *appointment*, and both need and receive daily *mercies* from him; it is but fit he should be worshipped and owned every day in particular families. Before the giving of the law to Moses, how

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* Chap. i. 5. † Gen. xxxv. † Mic. iv. 5.

was God worshipped but in families? Family-worship was the first kind of social worship: religion was at first confined to single persons; upon the increase of mankind, it began in families. Every ruler of a family was then a *priest* to his own house, or offered his own sacrifice, and governed his *family*, not only as *such*, but as a religious society: afterwards religion spread into larger societies. This was the first power entrusted by God to man, to be the head, and ruler, and father of a family; to take care of the welfare of that little society, and of all that belonged to it; especially to take care of religion, and the worship of God there. He was not only the civil governor, but the *priest*, though not by proper *office*; for that depends on institution as *typical*, and representative of the priesthood of Christ.

From the beginning doubtless the father of the family was the high-priest to it, and the duty of sacrificing was committed to him; and herein it is probable he had the special
assistance

assistance of the first-born of the family, whereby he might be initiated into his future duty. But that office of a priest was not confined to the elder brother; for Abel offered sacrifices in his own person, while his father and his elder brother were alive, as Abraham did after the flood, while the eldest son of Noah was living; and when the younger sons of Noah were separated, and dispersed into several distinct families, they did not lose the right of solemnizing the worship of God thereby.

When the world increased, and larger societies were established, the power of a parent as head of a family was in some respects broken, and parents had not the power of life and death over their children, as before: but much of the power of a parent, and master over his own family, is continued by God; and therefore children and servants are commanded to obey their parents and masters, as well as to obey civil magistrates. Now I would argue thus, that if *family-worship*,

worship, at first, did not exclude *personal* religion, and private prayer, as doubtless it did not; then the public worship of God (when many families meet together) should not exclude family-worship, or the daily invocation of God in particular families, by as many of such a little society as can come together. There is the same reason, why *family-worship* and *religion* should continue, after the *public worship* of God by many families together is set up, as that *personal religion*, and secret *prayer*, should continue a duty, after God began to be worshipped in *families*.

I shall not insist upon Queen Esther's keeping a fast with her maids, which was extraordinary; nor enlarge on the example of Jacob, who built an altar, and called on the name of the Lord, and exhorted his family to prepare for it; * *saying to his household, and all that were with him, Put away the strange gods, and let us build an altar to Jehovah, &c.* His grandfather Abraham cir-

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cumcised

* Gen. xxxv. 2, 3.

circumcised all the males in his house, brought them under the bond and seal of the covenant; and wherever he resided with his family for any considerable time, he built altars and offered sacrifices. That dreadful curse denounced and predicted against *the families that call not upon God's name* (though principally meaning *Tribes of people*; and though the calling on the name of God, means the worshipping the true God in opposition to idolatry) yet deserves to be considered; because, by parity of reason, it may extend to *lesser societies*, where the true God is not owned, and worshipped.

God has also promised to bless the habitations of the just, and he has often owned by his providence his acceptance of family-religion and worship. When all the old world had neglected God, and corrupted their ways, the true religion continued only in the family of Noah; he and his were saved from the universal deluge, when the rest were swept away by the flood.

We

We have very wonderful stories recorded of exemption from general calamities, little short of miraculous, in those houses wherein this duty of family worship was strictly and conscientiously performed; and though we dare not vouch for the truth of such narrations, yet are we far from conceiving it either impossible or improbable, that God should, by some eminent interposition of his providence, demonstrate, that his protecting hand is always over the righteous, and that his ears are ever open and attentive to their prayers.

For the instruction and teaching of children and servants, as a part of family-religion, there are sufficiently express scriptures. * *To bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; † to train them up in the way wherein they should go; and consequently to teach them to pray to God, and praise him. And the example of a parent or master is one of the best ways of teaching*

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them.

* Eph. vi. 4. † Prov. xxii. 6.

them. The Apostle tells us, that he that doth not provide for his own house and family, *hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.** He that doth not provide food and raiment for those of his own household, comes under this character. And if he be so bad, who takes no care of the welfare of their bodies, what shall we think of him who has no concern for their souls; not to instruct them in their duty to God, not to pray with them, not to read the holy scriptures to them? He, it may be, feeds and clothes his children and servants, as a kind father and master, and as an Englishman, but behaves to their souls like a barbarous Indian, or a careless infidel. As much more worth as the soul is than the body, so much worse is that man who is careless of the souls in his family, than he that is careless of their bodies: such a one, the Apostle says, *has denied the faith*; he cannot with any truth pretend to be a *Christian*.

How

• 1 Tim. v. 8.

How inconsistent then is it, for men to be admitted to the highest privileges of Christians, I mean to *the table of the Lord*, and yet neglect the worship of God in their families! We find that no proselyte might presume to come to the passover, unless *his whole house*, as well as himself, were *circumcised*, and professed the Jewish religion.* If this law, as well as its equity, were still in force, how few would now come to the holy sacrament!

He that doth not provide for his own, is worse than an infidel. He that would suffer their bodies to starve, and does not give them sufficient and proper food, deserves this censure and reproach: much more doth he who neglects their souls. It is not indifferent to you, whether your children and servants be fed and clothed, and have necessary provisions or no; whether they be nourished, or whether they be starved: and is it nothing to you whether they be happy or miserable for ever? You would not be ac-

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* Exod. xii. 47, 48.

cessary to the murder of their bodies; and will you not be as careful to avoid the like, and greater guilt, with reference to their souls?

If parents had no trust and charge committed to them from God (who saith, *All souls are mine*) with relation to the souls of their children; if masters were to give no account to God of their servants, but whether they gave them food and wages, &c. they might not be much concerned, as to these things. But we are stewards entrusted with the care of their souls, as well as their bodies; and it would be a miserable ground of reproach, if a child should say of its father, He never prayed with me, or instructed me in matters of religion, and so I minded it not; or if a servant should say he lived so many years with his master, and never had any assistance from him to further his salvation.

Certainly as to children, *parents* are more especially obliged, as having greater and nearer obligations to them, than any ministers

masters or pastors can have to their people. Our children are parts of ourselves; and if we are not concerned for their souls, we are unnatural and cruel to them: it is from us, their immediate parents, that they receive their corrupted nature, and therefore we are bound to endeavour their recovery and cure. We shall also condemn ourselves, in being solicitous for their bodily welfare, (which most are to an excess) while we neglect the salvation of their souls. And by our care of their souls, we provide for their temporal welfare too. God hath promised to bless the posterity of his servants. Though the church was continued in the line of Isaac, yet God promised to bless Ishmael for the sake of his father Abraham. *I will make him a great nation, for he is thy seed.** But remember they must die, and they are capable of grace and immortality; and shall we provide for them as we do for our beasts? Plutarch, censuring the abuse of parents, who strive to leave their children rich, and not vir-

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tuous,

* Gen. xxi, 13.

tuous, faith, they do like those who are solicitous about the shoe, but neglect the foot. They depend on us for their maintenance and livelihood; and so we have an advantage in our endeavours to promote their good; they will hearken to our counsels, when they will not regard what a minister can say. We have an interest in their affections, joined with an authority over them; they are with us in their tender years, and so our work is the easier.

This is well described by an eloquent pen.* “ God was confident concerning
 “ Abraham, that he would teach his children;
 “ and parents have great power by
 “ strict education, and prudent discipline, to
 “ form the minds of children to virtue,
 “ Joshua did undertake for his household,
 “ *I and my house will serve the Lord*; and for
 “ children we may better do it, because, till
 “ they are of perfect choice, no government
 “ in the world is so great, as that of parents
 “ over

* Bishop Jer. Taylor's Discourse of Baptism, quarto, 1653, p. 54, 55.

“ over their children. They rule over their
“ understandings, and children know no-
“ thing but what they are told, and they
“ believe it infinitely: and it is a rare art
“ of the Spirit to engage *parents* to bring
“ them up well in *the nurture and admoni-*
“ *tion of the Lord.* They are persons ob-
“ liged by a stronger tie: they are to give
“ them instructions and holy principles, as
“ they give them meat. It is certain parents
“ may better stipulate for their children,
“ than the church can for men or women.
“ They may be hypocrites, and the next
“ day may change their resolution, and grow
“ weary of their vow; and that is the most
“ that children can do, when they come of
“ age: and it is much in the parents,
“ whether the children shall do any such
“ thing or no; for education can intro-
“ duce a habit, and a kind of second nature,
“ against which children cannot kick, un-
“ less they do some violence to themselves,
“ and their inclinations.” And although it
fails too often, if it ever fails, yet we pro-
vide

provide most prudently against future events, when we begin early to put a right bias on the mind. This prudent conduct would succeed oftener, if parents were faithful in their duty to them while young. It would commonly succeed if we began betimes, according to the comparison which is made of childhood and youth, to water spilt on a table, it runs after you the way which you draw your finger. They may be prejudiced against a holy life, or settled in a way of sin, before they are capable of profiting by public preaching: but our teaching them at home, as it may begin sooner, so will prevail more: and they will acknowledge our teaching to be with *more authority* than that of the minister. I fear, faith a great divine, that many of those who are otherwise good people, do little understand, or consider the authority, which their teachers have over them from Christ. They know, it may be, how to value their *gifts*, but think not themselves bound to learn of them, and obey them in the Lord, by virtue of their

office. However, the obligation of ministers to teach their flock, will not cancel their duty of teaching them at home; no more than that because magistrates must govern the people, they should therefore not govern their own families.

How many, alas! neglect all these advantages, and suffer their children to go in the way to destruction, by not admonishing them how sinful it is to be proud and revengeful, to backbite and rail, to speak filthily, to curse and swear, to scorn holiness, and the word, and ministers, and commandments of God! It is in the parents' hands to do them the greatest kindness or cruelty in the world: what then should we think of that parent who could find in his heart to cast his child into a burning furnace, or to put him into the hands of one that would?

If therefore we love our children, let us shew it in those things wherein their greatest interest is concerned. Let us not say we
love

love them, and yet be so unmerciful as to destroy them: and what can we possibly do more towards it, than to bring them up in ignorance, sensuality, and neglect of God? Shall he that casts his child into the sea, say he intends not to drown him? or he that sends him into a pest-house, say he intends not to endanger his health? or he that trains him up in thievery and robbing, say that he intends not to have him hanged? It is the same in effect; for the law determines it, and the Judge will take care to have it done.

If then we would not be charged by God with the murder of their souls, and have them hereafter accuse us, as the means of their ruin, let us be now faithful and diligent for their salvation. It will be sad for those, who dedicated their children to God by baptism in their infancy, that afterwards they should bring them up in subjection to the devil, the world, and the flesh; as God complains,

complains,* *Thou hast taken thy sons, and thy daughters, which thou hast borne unto me, and these thou hast sacrificed to be devoured.* The sin of those Israelites, who sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils, † was less than that of negligent and profane parents, who sacrifice not only the bodies, but the souls of their children to Satan, and so bring them forth to the *murderer.* ‡

I hope I have said enough to recommend and urge the duty, till I hear what is further objected, besides the want of express positive scripture. Some of the most considerable objections, I shall hereafter consider. Let our conscience be faithful; and if we admit of conviction by what we read, let us take heed how we delay to do that which we cannot deny that we ought to do.

CHAP-

* Ezek. xvi. 20.

† Hos. ix. 13.

‡ Psalm cvi. 17.

CHAPTER II.

MUCH more might be said, and more *methodically*, to prove and urge so important a duty, as *family religion and worship*, than what has already been mentioned. I proceed now to answer some objections: only let me premise, that it is foretold concerning the days of the *Messiah*, when the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem; when the multitude of the isles shall rejoice, and all flesh shall see the glory of the Lord; that *belinefs to the Lord* (which was the inscription on the mitre of the high priest) shall be upon the very bells of the *horses*; and that every family shall be a temple, wherein God shall be worshipped.

And as God required of the Jews a *continual burnt-offering*, or a daily sacrifice of
two

two lambs; the one in the *morning*, the other in the *evening*; it may be expected that so often (at least) he should be worshipped every day in the families of his people. Our daily sacrifices by prayer and praise, under the fuller dispensation of Gospel-grace, should not be fewer or less frequent than those under the Jewish covenant.

But I hope I have already said enough to recommend the worship of God in families. Doubtless one advantage of it would be, to fit us for those other *duties*, and parts of *worship*, which are sometimes urged to excuse the neglect of *this*: for how many are ready to say, we pray to God every day in *secret*, and we join every week with others in *public worship*; and what need of any more? Whereas one part of our duty is so far from interfering with the other, that the one will help to the better performance of the other. By praying in *secret*, you will be better disposed to pray in your *family*: and by both these may obtain assistance and success in the
public

public worship of God; and by attending upon the public worship, you will be fitted for the other parts of your duty in secret and private. You are obliged to pray in secret, if you had no families; and it is very doubtful, in a numerous family, whether all the members of it do daily pray in secret, or not.

If it be said, that there are very many of those who make a great profession of religion, who yet live in the neglect of family worship; I answer, that is no wonder, because there are many who profess to be what they are not; who have a name to live, and are dead. But if they are real, upright Christians, they are either under the power of a present temptation, or under the conduct of an erring mind, or they are misled by some false teachers, &c. and thus they will go on in the neglect of this duty, till their error be removed, or the present difficulties in the way of this practice are got over; which many

many say they would be glad of, but cannot yet attain.

In some families it is pretended they have not *time* every day for this duty: “ My
“ trade will not allow me ; I have a charge
“ of children that must be maintained, and
“ my business must be minded ; or I am
“ obliged to be abroad early and late ; I
“ cannot read the holy scriptures in my
“ family, and pray every day, with those of
“ the family, for *want of time*.”

I have often thought of this objection, when frequently the providence of God has been pleased to remove it, as to a great many families, to their sad disappointment and sorrow. What else mean the many complaints of starving families for *want of trade*? They have time enough to pray when they have no work. Let such consider how righteous it is from God, that whereas, while they had trade and business, they would not

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find *time* to pray, God should punish their neglect by causing them to want *trade*, and wish for work to employ their *time*.

But what need is there for any to be so long in family-worship, as to hinder the business of their particular calling? Though it may be all in the family cannot come together, yet some may, and possibly the greater part, if a little prudence and consideration be used, as to the choice of the time.

And if less time were spent in the *morning*, in most cases there might be more employed in the *evening*. Many might redeem time from the *coffee-house*, and from the *tavern*, and from time-wasting *clubs*, and meetings by appointment without business; while their children and servants at home are exposed to temptation, and the worship of God either neglected there, or slightly performed towards midnight, between sleeping and waking.

Every

Every one will grant, that success in his trade and calling depends upon the blessing of Heaven; but most live as if they believed nothing of it. For it can hardly be denied, that to begin the day with God, and heartily implore his *blessing*, is the best way to have it. If what you get be not accompanied with the divine blessing, you will have little comfort in such increase. And how can it be proved, that it is your duty to covet so much worldly business, as is inconsistent with the worshipping of God in your families, and allow no time to take care of the souls of those committed to your charge? "Business," you say, "must be minded." Your lawful proper business, it is true, must be so, in its place; but this plea of pretended business has destroyed more souls, than all other instances of self-deceit put together.

How easily can God, by sickness, or grievous pains, unfit you for the business of your calling, or disable your servants by

sickness, if he be provoked by your neglect of him in your families? He may either blast all your diligence, so that you may labour much and get nothing; or he may disable you and yours from following your trade and business. Oh! how easily can God make you know, that if you will not find a time to pray, you must have a time to be sick, as well as others! How soon, and suddenly, may he summon you by death to his judgment-seat! Think now, whether, when you shall appear there, you will pretend the want of time for this work. Let conscience speak the truth; is it not that you want an inclination? God allows us sufficient *time* for our particular calling. If our hearts were filled with love to God, and awed with his holy fear, we should not rob him of that which belongs to his service. The grace of God sanctifying our hearts, would answer and remove a thousand such pretences.

There are many who cannot plead the want of leisure, yet urge the want of ability
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to instruct others, or to pray with them. But if your hearts are affected with a due sense of your family-wants, and sins, and mercies, you will soon be able, out of the abundance of the heart, to express yourselves sufficiently well: for it is not the language which God regards, but a serious desire, a holy and a thankful heart. You do not want words to express your desires in other cases; nor would you here, if you were to beg your own life, or that of a dear relation, of an earthly King or Judge. Besides, for those who can read them, there are books of devotion to instruct them in this duty. Even they who usually rejected *forms of prayer*, advised the use of one in this case. For some masters of families, the use of a good form is surely more advisable, and more for the good of those with whom they join, than to pray without one. All things should be done for *edification*; and experience will prove that few can do so well without one.

It is a greater discouragement to others from the daily worship of God in their *families*, that they are often composed of such persons as care not to join in such duties: or they are such scoffers, that it is a scruple whether they should be suffered to be present, if they were willing. Some had rather pray alone, than procure or desire such company; they think they had better leave them out, than have their presence, who will not heartily join in the requests that are made to God, and who desire not his grace, or seek his favour.

To such it may be said, that it is the duty even of wicked men to pray to God that they may be better: and you know not what success their joining with you may be attended with. Some have dated their first conviction and conversion, from *family prayer* and *instruction*. You knowing the sins of those in your family, will be very serious in the confession of sin; and God may touch their hearts, and give them repentance.

However,

However, if you look to your own hearts, and do not regard iniquity there, the wickedness of others in the family shall not be laid to your charge, while you do what lies in you for their recovery. The presence of Judas with our Lord and Saviour, when he prayed with his disciples, did not render their prayers unacceptable to God: *I know*, says Christ to his Father, *thou hearest me always*. If you are sincere in your worship, the presence of unworthy persons will not obstruct your acceptance with God: another man's unbelief will not prejudice thy faith. If you should scruple to pray in your families on that account, what think you of a Minister's prayer in the public congregation? If any neglect family-worship on this pretence, they may on as good ground refuse to come to the Lord's Table, because of the admission of supposed unworthy persons. But how is it that they come to hear the word, and join in public prayer in the congregation, while this objection is stronger there,

than with reference to prayer in their own houses ?

The authority of parents as to their children is so manifest, and their duty to oblige them to join in the worship of God is so plain, that it is principally to scornful, or stubborn *servants*, that this objection applies. And as to them, unless they prove much otherwise than you thought they would, you were greatly to blame in admitting such: and after trial of other means for their conviction and cure, if they can be removed, you ought to do it. *A froward heart shall depart from me; a slanderer will I cut off; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight,* or dwell in my house.* But where is the authority of the head of a family all this while? Should they not observe your orders in matters of trade and business, you would quickly let them know you were their masters. And does that relation in which they stand to you as Christians, signify nothing to them, while
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* Psal. ci. 4, 5, 7.

they dwell under your roof, and are employed in your service? Doth not the Fourth Commandment suppose a master's authority to bring his family to worship God with him? and doth not your concern for their souls oblige you to endeavour it?

There is one very common objection, that I fear, has too much of sad truth for the foundation of it, viz. that many of those who pray in their families, and read the holy scriptures there, and keep up the externals of religion beyond their neighbours, do yet live no better, than such as pray not; their children are no better than other men's children; their servants are no better than other men's servants; they themselves no better than their prayerless neighbours. They are as vain and worldly, as proud and passionate, as uncharitable, and as false in their dealings, as others, &c.

Would to God there were no ground for this objection! Woe be to the world because of such offences, and woe be to them
by

by whom they come ! Who can tell what unspeakable mischief they do, who keep up the worship of God in their families, and yet walk disorderly in their daily conversation ? What stumbling-blocks do they lay in the way of ignorant children, and ungodly servants, and neighbours, who are acquainted with it ! They tempt others to deny God, and make them question the reality of religion. But whatever hypocrisy any such may be guilty of in these duties, it will not discharge *you* from the obligation to perform them sincerely. You may as well refuse to join in public worship, because some constant hearers are no better than some of those who stay away, and turn their backs upon all positive institutions.]

However, it is not the effect of their praying, but it is the want of seriousness and sincerity, which provokes God to leave them to the power of temptation. It is not to be laid to the charge of Christ, or the Holy Scriptures, or religion, or Christianity,
that

that any professing Christians are so bad. No ruler was ever so severe against sin, as Jesus Christ; no law was ever so strict in forbidding sin, as the laws of Christ: the rule is strait; and the Christian religion is not to be blamed, because some that profess it are not true to their own profession: they condemn themselves, and dishonour God, and reproach their Lord and Saviour, and without repentance he will condemn them too. *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee.** I will reject your sacrifices; your very prayers shall witness against you.

A caution is yet needful here; to take heed of bearing false witness, or easily believing one against our neighbour. Do not hastily credit every story you are told, against such as profess religion: for the enemy employs a great many to do his work, by defaming

* Psal. l. 17.

defaming and discrediting such. Every lesser fall of such a one is readily magnified : though it were but a single fault, committed but once, and soon and heartily repented of, and seldom or never relapsed into, it shall yet be longer talked of, and more aggravated, than the customary, continued, foul miscarriages of others. This is seen daily among those whose hearts are filled with enmity against real holiness.

Granting therefore (what is too notorious to be denied) that *some* few, who pray to *God* every day, do yet live as if they believed there were *no God*; yet compare the families of such as daily worship God together, with the families of others, that neglect God and religion ; and it is not ordinarily true, that the *former* are no better than the *latter* : the families of such are commonly the nurseries of religion. Was not *Noah's* family better than the drowned world, though there were one *Ham* in it, as there was one *Judas* in the family of *Christ* himself? What would
you

you think of a man, who, looking over his neighbour's garden, when his own is all over-run with weeds, and wholly neglected, should see in his neighbour's ground here and there a weed, mixed with much useful produce, and thereupon should say, " These men that bestow so much pains about their gardens, yet have weeds in it, as well as those that do nothing ; who then would be at so much pains ? " Thus foolishly do people talk of those that pray, and read, and instruct their families, and hear sermons, and who have their faults, as well as others ; wicked persons amongst them, as well as others ; and whose children and servants are no better than others. But they consider not, that it is not the whole garden that is over-run with weeds, it is but *here* and *there* a weed ; and as soon as they spy any, they pluck them up, and do what they can to prevent their growth and spreading.

There is some difficulty indeed as to those whose lot is cast into *prayerless families*, who
would

would be truly glad to have the worship of God kept up; but have no power to bring it about. My lot is cast into a family, says a religious servant, where they call not upon the name of God from week to week, or at most, never more than once a week. If this be the case of *an apprentice*, and bound by his parents, who should have chosen better for him; he may bear it the better, as hoping God will not charge it as his fault. But if you rashly engaged yourselves in such a family, because it was a place of more ease, or more profit; you ought to repent, and beg of God forgiveness; and remove into a better, as soon as you can conveniently. But let me beg you, as you tender the honour of God, and the credit of religion, while you stay in such a wicked family, endeavour with the utmost humility, modesty, seriousness, and circumspection, to adorn your profession; to leave a conviction in the conscience of those with whom you dwell, that *a due sense of religion makes the best servants*. How sad is it, if by you who profess yourself a
Christian,

Christian, your ungodly masters or fellow-servants should be hardened, and stumbled, and prejudiced against religion, instead of becoming converts to it! It may fall out that if you so conduct yourself, as to win the love of all, you will have an opportunity offered, humbly to suggest something to promote family-prayer and worship, and possibly prevail to have it begun. Be sure, however, that you be more diligent and constant in secret prayer. The less help you have in the family, the more should you desire to be alone with God. But servants who value the welfare of their souls, and their improvement in grace, should take heed what families they choose to dwell in. Do not, out of choice, place yourselves in a house where God doth not dwell. You know he dwells in *the house of prayer*; his own house is such, and ours should be so too; and he delights in the praises of his people.

But is thy case yet worse? and art thou the *son of an irreligious father*, and yet canst

not leave the house? or art thou wife to a husband that regards not God or his own soul, much less thine, or any of the family? The same advice which was given before to religious servants is fit to be taken here, viz. to spend the more time in *secret prayer*, and *closet devotion*, and to pray the more earnestly and fervently for such a relation, who is the head of a family, and yet neglects the duty of his place. The holy fervent prayer of a believing child, or wife, may help to save an unbelieving parent, or husband; it may obtain grace from God to turn his heart. In the next sickness, or under the next worldly cross or disappointment, or family affliction, you may have a season offered, with meekness to suggest this, and other duties; and who can say with what success? However, take heed to adorn your profession: and let such near relations, with whom you are obliged to dwell, be convinced by your christian behaviour, of the amiableness and excellency of a holy life, and be made

made to think and speak well of practical godliness.

If the *parent*, or *husband*, be either unfit or unwilling to pray in the family, perhaps some other may be ready to do it in his stead.

Though it be the proper work of *the master of the family*, yet, in many cases another may be substituted; for, in his sickness or absence, I know not why, in divers cases, the *wife*, who is to share in the government of the family, may not perform *family prayer*, at least with those of her own sex, and even with all the family. If the husband do not his duty in this particular, what reason is there, that the wife may not be the mouth of the family to God in prayer, rather than it should be omitted?

These plain things I have here offered and recommended with seriousness, in order to remove the common objections and excuses for the neglect of *family-worship*, desiring to explain the duty of the several relations in

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religious

religious families. If any should be hereby confirmed or convinced, I shall have great cause to rejoice and bless God for the success of these my well-meant endeavours.

CHAPTER III.

I NOW proceed to give some *directions* and *advice* relating to the good regulation of a family.

All *heads of families* are in the first place obliged to be very careful and circumspect, serious and exemplary in their lives: they ought to take heed, that they give no example of vice before their *inferiors*. They will sooner find persons disposed to imitate them in what is *evil*, than *good*. Let them have no encouragement or countenance given them to sin, by any thing they see their masters do; who will quickly lose all authority, and power to reprove or suppress evil, if their own example countenance others in it.

it. It is altogether unlikely, that religion should thrive among children and servants, where the *parent* or *master* sets an example of drunkenness, of lewdness, of injustice, deceit, and fraud; or only keeps up the worship of God to serve some secular design. Woe to those *parents* and *masters*, whose children and servants are witnesses of their impiety, and too likely to follow them, without a wonderful measure of grace, to their eternal ruin. "Never parent had such a wicked child," said a *bad father* once to a *rebellious son*; "Yes, Sir," replied the graceless youth, "my *grandfather* bad." Some have enquired for what reason the Prophet Elisha called for vengeance on the *children* that mocked him, and styled him *bald-pate*,* when many of them, it is probable, hardly understood what they said. The reason assigned, is this, because the *children* learnt that language from their *parents*; and God punished the parents in the death of the children, and both at once. Some of the heathens have been very

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wary

* 2 Kings ii. 23.

wary and cautious, not to speak an uncomely word, or be guilty of any unseemly behaviour in the presence of their children. Certainly the head of a Christian family is obliged to behave himself *wisely* in an upright way, and to walk within his house with *a perfect heart*, † and in all things to shew himself *a pattern of good works*. ‡ A prudent, grave, cheerful, sincere deportment, as becometh saints, would recommend religion, and diffuse the savour of it to all about us. But if the master gives his children and servants ever so good counsel, they will sooner be influenced by a bad life, than by the best of words. All his good precepts and counsels will be as water spilt on the ground, if not accompanied by a good example. If he would reprove and amend any thing in their words or actions, let them be sure to hear nothing of it in his discourse, and see nothing of it in his practice. He must lead them the way in humility and charity, in the government of the tongue, the passions, and
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† Psal. ci. 2. ‡ Tit. ii. 7.

the appetite, in the redemption of time, in prayer, and in love to the holy scriptures, and the ordinances of the gospel, &c.

How can a drunken or unrighteous *father* or *master* expect his children and servants should be sober and faithful? Can he hope to teach them *sobriety*, whilst they see him intemperate? or *meekness*, when they see he cannot govern his passions? They will sooner learn his sin, than his trade. And is not the money given with such an apprentice very ill bestowed? One, two, three hundred pounds, or more, are a great deal too much to pay for endangering our children's souls, by the example of a wicked master. Let our own example then teach all our relations, that holiness and unblameableness in word and deed, which we desire they should learn and practise.

But, besides our own example, we are obliged by all other ways to endeavour their spiritual and eternal good. We are *worse*

than infidels, if we provide not what is *needful*, and *fit* for them as to their temporal life; much more, if we neglect their souls. Let us look upon them with pity and compassion; help them as knowing their ignorance, their temptations, and danger. Let us remember, they must shortly die, and be saved or perish for ever. Let us use all advantages we have to do them good : let them not be betrayed to eternal ruin, by our neglect. Ministers, by public preaching, cannot do so much to further their salvation as we can; and it is very little they can hope to do, without our assistance. Unfaithful ministers are blamed enough who neglect the souls of their people; but we consider not our own guilt, who are so negligent of them ourselves. We expect more duty sometimes from our minister, than he can perform, while we make no conscience of neglecting our own duty, in our proper sphere.

It will be a dreadful circumstance in the day of recompence, to have children or ser-

vants accuse their parents and masters; saying, "I was so many years in my father's house; or I lived so long with such a master, who never concerned himself about my soul: I had never been a servant of sin, if he had done his part to prevent it." The like will be true of ungodly *husbands* and *wives*, who, notwithstanding their duty, and profession of the dearest love, do little or nothing to save one another from the wrath to come; who neither by example, nor discourse, nor prayer, nor admonition, discover any care for each other's soul. Nay, how many in such relations rather serve to hinder and obstruct the happiness and salvation of those whom they are most concerned and obliged to help! For if the one be ungodly, and the other be a serious Christian, the *latter* will commonly find the greatest opposition and difficulty, and hindrance in religion, from him, or her, who should have given the greatest help and assistance.

Let us remember then, that, besides prayer in our house, we have other endeavours to use, for the salvation of those that live with us. We mock God by praying for the conversion of children and servants, if we do not otherwise strive to effect it; if we do not endeavour to convince them of their sin, and of their need of Christ and his grace; if we do not put them in mind of the uncertainty of this life, and of the certain account they must give to God of all their time and talents, &c. And yet this neglect is now so common, that they are reckoned *good parents*, and *good masters*, who will even give their children and servants leave to be good, and go to heaven without them; who will not hinder their inferiors from serving God. Whereas we have much to do of positive duty, to inform their minds, to furnish their memories, to rectify their wills, to quicken their affections, to keep tender their consciences, and restrain their tongues, and watch over their outward carriage; to make them hate sin, and love holiness, and reverence

rence the scriptures, and delight in the ordinances and institutions of Christ, and like good company, and dislike all others,

To what end hath God given us *the authority of parents, or masters*, if not to prevent sin, and to promote holiness in our families? Human nature is so corrupt, that unless in some few, with whom the effects of grace and holy baptism are discovered in childhood, there need to be great restraints put upon it, by those who have power and authority over young people. That authority must be kept up, lest they should be despised by those whom they should rule. They must labour therefore to understand the nature, use, and extent of that authority, with relation to all in their family. And the more they grow in knowledge and holiness, and walk according to the rules of the gospel, the better will they preserve their authority among all their inferiors. Humility and wisdom, and circumspect walking, will enable them to do the more good, in the use of
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that power which God has given them. The indulgence, and allowance of children in what is sinful, we know highly provoked God in the case of *Eli*; and we also know how dear it cost him. *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* * We must not let wickedness dwell in our tabernacle, † or in those of our family. They will observe our orders, and regard our commands; if we do not indiscreetly lose our authority, by not keeping our distance, or suffering them to be too bold with us; or on the other hand making them too strange, so as to be fearful and discouraged; (I here speak especially of children;) if what we resolve upon, and order, in commanding what is good, or forbidding what is evil, we see punctually observed, still managing all with affection and love; and manifesting the honour of God, and the salvation of their souls, to have been our prevailing motive. And remember, that commendation, when they do well, is as needful as reproof and correction.

* 1 Sam. iii. 13.

† Job xi. 14.

rection when they transgress; which ought also to be without partiality, or countenancing of one above the rest.

The like may be said, though with some difference, with respect to *our servants*. Let us be just, compassionate, and kind to them, but let us not lose our authority: let us be faithful and affectionate in advising them for the good of their souls. But if they be refractory and stubborn, and slight our advice, and go on in sin, and wax worse and worse, and deride the serious godliness of their fellow-servants, we must use other methods, or get rid of them as soon as we can. We are to take care, that wickedness dwell not within our house, without reproving it. We must warn them who are unruly, and of others have compassion, making a difference. Some must be rebuked sharply, others we must save with fear, pulling them as it were out of the fire.*

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• Jude, ver. 22, 23.

As to those who have trades and families, but whom God hath not blessed with *children*, or hath taken them away by death ; their care, and labour, and trust, are thereby lessened, and they ought to be the more careful with respect to their *servants*. They have many considerations to keep them from repining, or sorrowing much for the want of children, upon the account of the duty, the pains, the care, and grief of heart, from which they are freed : for in this dissolute age, how few children answer the hopes, desires, and pains of parents, or prove comforts to them when they grow up ! If God had given them children, or prolonged their lives ; what a life of trouble and sorrow might they probably have passed in this world ! besides the constant fear they would have had of their falling into sin, which may be put in the balance against the *uncertain comforts* of those who have children, that consolation only excepted, which arises from the faithful discharge of their duty to them.

More

More particularly, it is advisable, with family prayer, to join *serious reading of the holy scriptures* every day, and frequent catechizing, or instructing of inferiors in the principles of religion. * Abraham had such trained, catechised servants in his house. *These things that I command thee, says God to his ancient people, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy servants.* † *Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* ‡ Acquaint them by little and little with the great doctrines of Christianity; give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, as they are able to receive and bear it. Acquaint them betimes with the word, and works of God, *When you sit in the house, or walk by the way, or lie down, or rise up; by asking them questions, and encouraging them to ask you.* Abraham's example is approved and recommended by God in this matter; § *For I know him, that he will com-*
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* See Appendix. † Prov. iv. 4. xxii. 6. 2 Tim. i. 3.

‡ Deut. iv. 9. xi. 19. § Gen. xviii. 19.

*mand his children, and his household after him;
that they shall keep the way of the Lord.*

Never did any age afford better helps for *catechizing*, than this; there being so many excellent expositions of our church catechism, and which may be justly considered as a summary of the Christian religion.

The reading of the holy scriptures frequently in our families, as well as in our closets, upon the week-days, as well as upon the Lord's day, I hope I need not use many arguments to recommend. * They are able to make us wise unto salvation, and they are suitable to every case that any of us can be in. They that cannot or will not read, or have not so much time to read, may be profited by our reading the holy scriptures in our family with them. The *singing of psalms or hymns*, in Christian families, where there are enough who are able to join in that part of worship, is also a very commendable and excellent

* Deut. xi. 18.

excellent part of family-religion. * *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, especially on the Lord's day: Of the due observance of which I would next speak, because I am persuaded that no family-religion can be kept up, without the sanctification of the weekly sabbath. What the Jews said falsely of Christ, we may apply truly enough to many a parent or master: This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day, and takes no care that his family with him do so. We have many helps to understand the nature of this duty, and to secure our Christian deportment on that day, in public, private, and secret. We shall do well to make some preparation for the solemnity of that day; and in the morning to possess our souls with the consideration of the privilege we enjoy in such weekly seasons of approaching to God, and paying homage to him. Real godliness has*
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* Col. iii. 16.

never been found to flourish where the strict observation of the Lord's day has been neglected.* If we begin with God in secret, that will prepare us for family-worship; the private worship of God in our families will fit us for the public; and our careful attendance on that, will help us to return to the worship of God in our families, and closets. We ought so to regulate these duties, that one may not interfere with the other. Let us sanctify the whole day to God, improve every part of it, make it not shorter than the other days of the week, as many do, by rising later, and going to bed sooner. Let us bring as many of our family to the public worship with us, as we can. When Elkanah went to *sacrifice to the Lord, he and all his house went with him.* † And if we recollect, and repeat to them afterwards, the substance of what we and they have heard preached,

* See my Lord Chief Justice Hale's Contemplations, with his Directions to his children, touching the keeping of the Lord's day.

† 1 Sam. i. 21.

preached, it may promote their attentiveness in hearing, assist their memories to retain what they heard, and quicken our own affections. By reading the Holy Scriptures, by catechising, by repeating sermons, &c. our children and servants will be instructed in the knowledge of God, his nature, and works, and will; in the knowledge of themselves, the immortality of their souls, the nature of sin, our first apostacy, and the sad effects of it; our redemption and recovery by Jesus Christ; his person, his offices, his ordinances and sacraments; his promises, the covenant of grace, the properties and privileges of believers, the rewards and punishments of the next life, &c.

In short, let us spend that day, as knowing how small a part of every week *one day* is, to be solemnly employed in preparing for an eternal state: let us employ that day, under the sense of the value of immortal souls, our own and others: and let us think how near the judgment-day may be, when we must

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be accountable to God for all our time, and especially such sacred time. Let us spend that day, as being aware of the good or evil influence it will have upon all the other days of the week; the affairs of our souls will thrive, or not, as *the Lord's day* is sanctified, or neglected: the souls of our children and servants, if not regarded then, are unlikely to be attended to on the other days of the week: and oftentimes it is found, that even our civil and secular affairs prosper, or not, according to our care or remissness in sanctifying the Lord's day.

Moreover, we ought not only to pray with our families, and worship God with them; but to observe the necessities of every one in particular, and heartily *to pray for them in secret*. We should have more comfort in our family-relations, and God more glory from them, did we more fervently beg of God the grace which we and they stand in need of. Many are the instances of those who have had gracious answers to their requests

quests for such as were near and dear to them. How can we strive with God in prayer for our own souls, and not remember to do the like for those whose souls are committed to our care? *Have mercy on me, O Lord!* says the woman of Canaan unto Christ: *my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* A certain man, at another time, comes kneeling to him, saying, *Lord, have mercy upon my son, for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed; for oftentimes he falls into the fire, and oftentimes into the water.* Such prayers had success for the cure of bodily evils; how much rather may they be hoped to be successful for the cure of spiritual ones! If the case of our children resemble this, and any of them are so unfortunate as to fall, sometimes into one sin, sometimes into another, being hurried and led captive by the devil; let us pray, that God would dispossess Satan, and that he would have mercy on them, and bring them to themselves. We know not what effect our prayers may have while we live; nor of what advantage the prayers which we have offered

may be unto our children after our death. The largest portion, the fairest inheritance or estate we can leave them, may be a much less kindness. Our hearty prayers for their salvation, is a treasure they cannot sufficiently value. Whereas a wicked father *lays up iniquity for his children*, as we have the expression. * He may store up riches, and God treasures up wrath: and, upon imitation of their father's sins, God fills up the measure of their judgment. †

While we neglect not family and private prayer, we may humbly hope that God will prosper our secular endeavours, that he will favour our diligence in our calling; and especially that he will reward our faithfulness to the souls of inferiors. If our children be good, let us bless God for such a mercy: if others are not such as we wish them, let not our sorrowful complaints as to *one*, silence our gratitude for divine grace manifested in another. All our children
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Job xxi. 19, 20. † Luke xi, 48, 50.

were born in sin, and might have lived and died in sin: it is well if God hath heard our prayers, and blessed our endeavours as to one or more, though not to all.

In the management of family prayer, care is to be taken to choose the *fittest time*. A good man will endeavour to order his spiritual affairs with discretion, as well as his temporal ones. In family-worship we must labour to be serious and affectionate: though ordinarily we make our services short, we may be somewhat longer on the Lord's day. *Serious*, I say, and *affectionate*: for if he that is the mouth of others to God in prayer, be indolent in his heart, they who join with him are not like to be affected. We ought discreetly to choose *the time* also: in the morning, if it be deferred till such or such a *business* be first dispatched, or if it be not one of the first things done in the morning, we shall find something or other intervene, to hinder it altogether; and in the evening, in such families where it can conve-

niently be done, it should be before supper; for the evening is the most desirable time. Many never kneel down to pray in their families at night, till they are fitter to lie down upon their beds.

In the ordering of these things, let *husbands* and *wives*, who would further the salvation of each other's souls, jointly concur to promote godliness in their families. Their first care should be to endeavour to promote the salvation of each other's souls. For this they have scripture-encouragement. * *For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?* It is true, no serious Christian would deliberately choose to be so nearly related to one that is a stranger to Christ: and they who are so related ought to beg God forgiveness for their sinful rashness. But if they find themselves mistaken in their choice in that respect, they must use the greater care to persuade them to be such as they supposed them to have been:

remem-

* 1 Cor. vii. 16.

remembering, however, that if they cannot as yet love them as *real saints*, they must yet love them as *husbands and wives*.

But how hopefully may religion be carried on in the family, where *both* are devoted to God ! How should they build up one another in their holy faith, watch over each other, study their tempers and dispositions, exhort one another daily with meekness and wisdom, and strengthen one another's hands in the discharge of their respective duties ; manifesting the utmost union in this work, lest, through the want of it, their authority be weakened, and their endeavours be disappointed. The endeavours of both are required : and if divine mercy descend from parents to children, it is on this condition, that they take care to bring them up in the knowledge, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. When they grow up, their duty is to call upon their children, to renew their covenant with God in the solemn ordinance of confirmation. And let it be remembered,

that *both parents* are equally concerned to bring up their children for God. *Men* should not cast all the care of children and servants on their *wives*; and women should consider, as a matter of duty, their joint interest in the religious government of the family. I wish it ~~were~~ not a very frequent case, that they, who should rule, are themselves most unruly; and the cause that the family is ungodly, and ungoverned.

There is a great latitude in the duty of parents to their children, to take care of them in infancy, to dedicate them to God betimes, and bring them into covenant with God by *baptism*; and to teach them the meaning of it, as soon as they are capable of learning the nature of their baptismal engagements; to keep them in subjection while young; to encourage them in all that is virtuous, and praise-worthy, and good; and lovingly and seasonably to reprove them for what is evil; to dispose of them with wisdom and care, as to their schools, callings,
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and marriage, according to their rank and station, in the best manner they can; and therein to consider the interest of their souls, as well as their temporal welfare, and prefer it above every other consideration. Let them beg of God to teach them the true *medium* between the errors of education, on either *extreme*; either that of humouring them in vanity, and indulging them in sin, or that of frowardness, harshness, and too much severity. If their own parents be living, let them give their children an example of the honour and obedience they expect from them, by their becoming carriage towards their grand-parents.

If we would recommend and promote religion among children and servants, there is one thing to be principally regarded—never to speak of God and sacred things, without the utmost *seriousness* and *reverence*. If we do not impress their minds with an awe and reverence of God, and Christ, and the holy Scriptures, and the life to come, we shall do
them

them little good. We must begin betimes to do this. Mothers especially may give instruction to their children, almost with their milk: at least they may teach them to pray, as soon as they begin to speak. Timothy received that knowledge of the faith, in his childhood, from his mother and grandmother, (though his father was a Greek, or a Heathen *) which afterwards he publicly professed, and to which he so stedfastly adhered.

And much of the good or bad impression upon their minds, from what we say, will depend upon the manner of our speaking: our words must discover our honourable thoughts of God, and holiness, and holy Christians, and ministers, &c. They will be apt to like what we commend. Let us endeavour therefore to speak of sin, and of wicked men, with loathing and dislike; that they may see *our judgment*, and learn to form *their own*. The way to win them betimes to the fear of
God,

* Acts xvi. 1.

God, and hatred of that which is evil, is frequently to represent, in our discourse, how safe, how profitable, how honourable, and pleasant a life is a life of *godliness*. Hereby we remove, or cure their prejudices concerning practical religion, as a melancholy burdensome thing. And let us take heed what *books* they read, and what *company* they keep, lest their minds be poisoned and corrupted by ill principles, and their hearts inticed and drawn to sin; and so all our instructions fail of success.

But our counsels and discourse, backed by a holy *example* to inforce them, may do much good; and will, if these go together: for if our *inferiors* see us unjust, deceitful, drunken, wanton, cruel, &c. all our serious talk will do them harm rather than good; especially if we do not conduct ourselves wisely with respect to them; if parents are passionate, and hasty with their children; or if masters are barbarous and unkind to their *servants*,

not considering that they also have a Master in heaven.

But of all the serious things which may be proper to be recollected, there is hardly any thing of greater moment, than to instil often into their minds, the inestimable value of *time*; that they may be brought to hate *idleness*, and be careful not to mispend one hour: but, as they grow more capable of improving it, may be constantly employed. You cannot insist too much on the *shortness* and *uncertainty* of our *time* on earth; nor on the consequence of spending it well or ill, in order to our future account. The devil is almost sure of those who are brought up in idleness, and put no value upon their *precious time*. Let us urge this therefore to our inferiors, and help them to improve their time, and to begin every day with *private prayer*, and to employ the other part of it, in what is suitable to their age, capacity, condition, and relation.

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We shall do well to put them upon *private prayer*; to advise our children and servants, and charge them to pray *alone* every day, as well as to be willing to join in family prayer. We ought also to teach them, by word and by example, to beg a blessing on their food, at the usual seasons of refreshment, and seriously to return thanks afterwards. We depend on God for *our daily bread*: and our blessed Saviour did never eat himself, or feed others at his table, but he blessed, and gave thanks. * So the Apostle; † who tells us, that by prayer and thanksgiving is every creature sanctified. ‡

It will be of great moment, in order to a religious, well-ordered family, to be very careful *whom* we admit to dwell with us. The case may be so stated, it is true, that we must occasionally dwell with such as scorn and despise family-religion and worship; but let us take heed lest we wilfully choose such relations, and
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* Mark viii. 6, 7.

† 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.

‡ Acts xxvii. 25.

such inmates. It may be, David thought that *Michal*, who, he knew, came of a bad stock, might be prevailed with by him to join in the worship of God, and in time be brought over to what he desired; but she despised him in her heart, and mocked at his zeal, and proved a snare and a cross, and made him repent of his choice. Woe to him who hath a Philistine in his bosom, as Samson had. *Marriage* is the point of life on which its happiness almost universally turns. Our future religion, and our eternal interest, are greatly concerned therein. We find the wickedness and ruin of several of the Kings of Israel, laid at this door; that they married into a wicked family: *such a one* had a wife of the house of Ahab, and was quickly drawn off from God, by one who had a wicked Ahab to her father, and a cursed Jezebel to her mother; and she stirred him up to work wickedness.

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• 1 Kings xxi. 25.

A due care on this account is to be had in the choice of *servants* also: they are to be preferred, who by *education*, and as far as we can judge, by *inclination* too, will be willing to serve God, and rejoice in the helps they may have to do so, in a religious family. And how orderly and beautiful is *family-worship*, where all in the house heartily join in it! We complain, we cannot bring our servants to do what we desire, as to matters of religion, when it may be we had nothing of religion in our view, in the choice of servants. It may be for a small sum less with an apprentice, or for the same wages to another servant, you might have had one, whose education and inclinations would have been more encouraging; and who would thank God for the enjoyment of such advantages, for the knowledge and service of God, as he might have in your house. Servants also in disposing of themselves, and *parents* in the disposing of their children, ought to consider this. A wicked master will carelessly take wicked servants, and make them

them worse. *When a ruler (of an house, or town, or country) hearkeneth to lies (or is otherwise wicked), all his servants are wicked.** Such a one cannot endure the constant reproof that is given him by the good conversation even of a servant; and therefore will desire no more religion in a servant, than not to be unfaithful to his trust. I wish there be not some *masters* (even amongst those, who would be accounted *religious*) who are shy of choosing servants, that have the character of being *so*; contrary to David's practice. † It is true, some that have been well educated, have proved very ill afterwards; and masters have found themselves mistaken, after all their care in this matter: but if they did their duty, made the best choice, and used the best endeavours they could, they may have peace and quiet in their own minds, when they meet with a disappointment; which otherwise they cannot.

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* Prov. xxix. 12. † Psal. ci. 4, 5, 7.

They ought to be careful whom they admit into their families; unless they value their *particular* calling above their *general* one: for who can tell the mischief that *one bad servant* may do in a house? *One sinner destroys much good*: one Joseph may bring a blessing upon a family, and upon all that his master hath in the house. You can hardly expect that God should prosper you with a blessing in what you undertake, when you care not with what tools you work, or whom you employ: and in the nature of the thing, there is little reason to hope, that they who are *false* to God, and to their own souls, will ordinarily be *faithful* to you. We read of those who were no good men, viz. Laban, and Potiphar, &c. who prospered the better for taking good servants into their families; but we no where read of a good man, that was the better for a wicked servant: we have had experience every day to the contrary.

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But the welfare and the comfort of religious families, depends not wholly on the duty of the heads of it: they who are *children*, or *servants*, are obliged thankfully to improve the blessing of religious *parents*, and *masters*, and faithfully to do their duty in each relation. Without a wonderful change by the grace of God, you will never be good *parents* to your own children, (if you live to have any) if you are not good in the relation of *children*. The same may be said for servants: nor are they like to be good *husbands* or *wives*, good *masters* or *mistresses*, who were not good in their former relation, as *children* or *servants*. Neither are such as are not good in their family-relations like to be so in any other: either good *neighbours*, or good *members* of a *church*, or *magistrates* in the *state*. Absalom, a rebellious child, proved a traitorous subject: Hophni and Phineas, disobedient children, proved scandalous and sacrilegious priests; so in other instances.

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Let children honour and obey their parents in the Lord: see that there be inward reverence, respect, and love; despise not their persons, slight not their instructions, or their rebukes, or their lawful commands, or government. Take heed of speaking contemptuously of either of them. *He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.* His lamp shall be put out in darkness.†* You should prize their counsels, delight in their presence, rejoice in their company, sympathize with them in their sorrows or joys, and readily deny yourselves for their sakes. The expressions of *outward honour* from children to parents, by the dissoluteness of the age, are almost out of fashion, viz. to bow before them, and desire their blessing or prayers, to speak always with respect to them, and of them, &c. The honour that consists in *obedience* may be expressed many ways; as by being willing to obey their lawful orders, on every occasion; to be content to have their own will opposed, that

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* Lev. xx. 9. † Prov. xx. 20.

the will of their parents may be fulfilled ; by not marrying without their knowledge and consent ; and by submitting to their just reproof, rebuke, and correction ; and obeying them especially in the things of God, and for the good of their souls. There is an *honour* due to *parents*, which consists in *thankfulness*, and *recompence* ; readily serving them, and supplying their outward wants ; comforting them in their sorrows, sufferings, sickness, old-age ; being solicitous for their safety, and welfare, concerned for their reputation and good-name, praying daily for them ; and plentifully, freely, and honourably providing for them, according to the children's ability, and the need of the parents. Thus Joseph did, when advanced in the court of Pharaoh. This is not *justice* only, but *piety*. *Let them learn to shew piety at home, and requite their parents.* * And our Lord reproves the Scribes and Pharisees, who by their corrupt doctrines would dispense with this obligation from children. † Those children then who
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* 1 Tim. v. 4.

† Matt. xv. 5, 6.

are a grief to their parents, or purloin their goods, or waste their estates, or do not to their utmost minister to the supply of their wants, do so far fail of their duty. The children of *religious parents* are especially bound to pay them honour; and so to walk, as to reflect honour on them; imitating their good examples, thanking God for his special mercies to their parents, while they live, and doing what they can to honour them at their death; pleading with God the covenant-relation of their parents, to obtain a blessing on themselves, as their offspring; and faithfully adhering to the truth and worship of God, as their holy parents did before them.

This honour is due to parents, whether they be rich or poor, wise or weak; whether in an honourable station in the world, or in meaner circumstances; whether in vigorous health, or bowed down under sickness, and the infirmities of old-age: remember still they are your parents.

It is a mercy you ought to be very thankful for, to have religious parents, and live in a religious family. It is a prize in your hands, of which you must give an account: and a sad account it will be, if you remain ignorant of God, and rebels against the Gospel, under those advantages to know and obey your Saviour, which others want. How unthankful are you, if you value it not as a privilege? What remorse of conscience do you provide, if you improve it not! You might have been born of such parents, as would have wholly neglected the salvation of your souls; or you might have been cast into some atheistical families, where God is not worshipped at all. Few are sensible enough of the obligation they are under to God, by being related as *husband or wife, as child or servant*, to such as truly fear God.

I would here call such children to *repentance*, who have neglected, and failed in their duty to parents. Let grown persons reflect on their childhood, and youth, when they lived

lived with their parents, and since, whether they have not been stubborn and rebellious, irreverent and disrespectful in their carriage to one or both of them? whether they have not secretly despised them in their hearts, or openly published their infirmities? whether they have not often disobeyed their lawful commands, or slighted their wholesome admonitions? whether they have not denied, or been backward to assist and comfort them? whether they have not secretly coveted their estates, before their death? or desired that it might be hastened? whether they honoured them, inwardly with a good conscience, from the love of God, and a sense of his authority? Let us call ourselves to an account, and renew our repentance before God, for such sins, that his pardoning grace may prevent his threatened wrath. And let us take heed to live hereafter as the children of those, of whom God was not ashamed to be called their God.

Remember the advantages of your being thus related to holy parents: many are the instances of the kindness of God to children upon the account of their fathers. But you stand fairest for spiritual and eternal blessings; you are children of the covenant, and members of the visible church of Christ; the blessing of Abraham, *I will be thy God*, which reached unto his seed, being now come upon us Gentiles.* You have many *helps* to serious godliness, which others have not: you have many *hindrances* removed, which make it more difficult for others, who descend from wicked parents, and live in ignorant irreligious families. You have more knowledge of God and Christ, of sin and duty.

Remember your relation, and think what God and all the world expect from you. There is a great privilege belonging to the children of holy parents, if they do not forfeit it, by forsaking and practically disavowing *their fathers' God*. If you will own him,

* Gal. iii. 14.

him, he will be *your God*, as well as *theirs*. You have an early interest in Him as *your God*, if you will devote yourselves to him, and fulfil his covenant. To be ungodly children of holy parents, is the greatest unworthiness that can be. *Be astonished, O ye heavens! at this,* * that any persons, or people, should cast off their God. *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not,* saith Solomon, much less *thy father's God*. How reproachful will be your wickedness, if you are not better than others! if you, who are the children of the covenant, become the children of the Devil, by doing his works! Shall there be a scoffing Ishmael come out of Abraham's house, or a profane Esau from Isaac's family? a rebellious Absalom, or a filthy Amnon, be found in the family of the holy David? God forbid! Certainly a wicked child of religious parents is one of the most miserable spectacles in the world. He is within the visible family of God, devoted to him, made acquainted with his duty,

and

* Jer. ii. 12.

and can have no excuse for his sin. What aggravation hath such a one's guilt! They must have stifled more convictions, and resisted more grace, than others. And how sure and severe will be their condemnation, when all the prayers and pains of holy parents shall witness against them!

And have you no concern for, or love to your parents? Consider how wicked children embitter all the comforts of their good parents. *The father of a fool*, saith the wise man, *hath no joy.** While parents are in bitterness for a dissolute child, they cannot have that joy and comfort in one another, which they otherwise might; nor in the other children, who are more hopeful: the whole family is afflicted, and disturbed. The grace of God, by which they overcome their own corruptions, gives them not so much comfort as they would otherwise feel, when they see the sin, they have mortified and forsaken, break out and reign in any of their

* Prov. xvii. 21.

their children. Nor can they rejoice in God, and Jesus Christ, as otherwise, when, according to the word of God, they hope and believe he is their friend and father, and, by the same word, have too much cause to fear, that if they get to heaven themselves, such of their children are not likely to follow them thither.

Lastly, Let *children* and *servants* take heed of their carriage towards *one another*. Let them endeavour after concord, and union, and love; and avoid contention, and falling out, and the use of provoking, exasperating language on any occasion. Let them help one another as they can, in health and sickness, and take each other's concernment as their own. Let them watch over one another, as to the sins and temptations they are most in danger of. Let them beware of vain unprofitable discourse, and idleness; and most carefully put away all filthy corrupt communication, whereby they may poison the souls of one another. Let them tenderly
bear

bear with one another's failings, and prudently conceal each other's faults, where the concealment of them tends not to the wrong of the parent or master, or of any other, and where the revealing of them will only stir up strife. This would also help to promote *family religion*.

May these imperfect admonitions be serviceable to that purpose! With that hope I commend them to the Divine blessing, and my fellow-christians to his grace and providence. Let us unite in the resolution, that *whatever others do, we with our house will serve the Lord*, and worship the God of *our fathers*; and in that way and manner, as to *our families*, wherein we have, besides their example, so great encouragement from the holy Scriptures, and from reason, and from the practice of the best men in all ages of the world.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

Questions proper to be proposed by Parents to their Children, and Masters or Mistresses to their Servants, (in the course of their Family-instructions), especially before Confirmation, and the Reception of the Holy Communion.

Q. **W**HAT is God?

A. One almighty and infinite Spirit, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Q. What hath he done for us?

A. He hath created all things, and he governs and preserves all things.

Q. What hath he done for our souls?

A. He hath sent his only Son into the world, to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification.

Q. How do you know this?

A. He

A. He hath declared it in his Word.

Q. Hath this Word revealed to you any thing farther concerning God's mercy to our souls?

A. Yes: it describes our Saviour, as having ascended into heaven, to intercede with God the Father, and to prepare mansions of glory for his faithful servants.

Q. Having known thus much concerning God, what ought we to know concerning ourselves?

A. What *we were*, what *we are*, and what *we shall be*.

Q. What *were* we?

A. In our first estate, before the entrance of sin into the world, perfect and happy; made in the image of God, in knowledge, holiness, and righteousness.

Q. What *are* we?

A. Since the fall of our first parents, children of wrath, and subject to misery and death.

Q. How are we delivered from this state?

A. We

A. We are, by Baptism, purified from original sin, and made the children of Grace.

Q. What *shall* we be?

A. They who are cleansed from their sins, and renewed by Grace in this life, shall, through Jesus Christ, be eternally happy in a better.

Q. What is required to put us in this happy state?

A. An habitual fear and love of God, as well in the ordinary course of our lives, as in the immediate exercises of religious worship.

Q. Where are the fear and love of God prescribed to us?

A. Both in the Law and the Gospel.

Q. What doth the Law teach us?

A. In the Ten Commandments it teacheth piety towards God, justice and charity to our neighbour, and purity and holiness as to ourselves.

Q. And what doth the Gospel prescribe?

A. Faith and Repentance.

Q. What

Q. What is that Christian faith which we profess?

A. A firm belief in Jesus Christ, and a thorough persuasion that he is both able and willing to save all that come unto God through him.

Q. What is Repentance?

A. A sincere sorrow for, and hatred of our sins, with a stedfast purpose of better obedience for the time to come.

Q. What are the proper fruits of Faith and Repentance?

A. Obedience and an holy life.

Q. What are the particulars required of us in the worship of God?

A. An attentive hearing and reading of the Word of God, diligent and earnest prayer, and receiving the holy Sacraments.

Q. What mean you by the Word of God?

A. The holy Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testaments.

Q. What is prayer?

A. A devout application of the soul to God, for the supply of all our wants, for pardon

don and peace, for grace and glory, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Q. What are the Sacraments?

A. Baptism, whereby we are called to a state of salvation; and the Lord's Supper, whereby we are strengthened to continue in it.

Q. What ordinance doth our Church prescribe, as intermediate between these two Sacraments?

A. That of Confirmation.

Q. What is Confirmation?

A. A solemn renewal of the covenant made with God in our name at our baptism, to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, to believe in God, and to keep his commandments.

Q. What are the benefits conveyed to us by the rite of confirmation?

A. We are again dedicated in our own right, and by our own deliberate choice, to the service of God; and we receive the benefit of the devout prayers of our fellow-christians, and the solemn blessing of the

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Bishop,

Bishop, who, in laying on of hands, implores God's heavenly grace, that we may continue his servants for ever, and grow in grace, till we are received into glory.

Q. What preparation is necessary for confirmation?

A. A serious enquiry how far we have fulfilled, and wherein we have broken, our baptismal covenant; and an earnest desire, with prayer to God to enable us, more faithfully to observe it for the time to come.

Q. What is necessary to enable us to continue in that good way wherein confirmation places us?

A. A constant partaking of the holy communion.

Q. What is the necessary preparation for this?

A. A due examination of ourselves, whether we rightly understand what we there commemorate, viz. the death of Christ for man's salvation.

Q. What other enquiries must we make?

A. Whether

A. Whether we are truly penitent for our sins past, and sincerely resolved to lead a more holy life.

Q. What are we to enquire concerning our faith?

A. Whether we believe that Jesus died for us, and that his death was a sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

Q. What ought to be the disposition of our hearts towards God, more especially on this occasion?

A. We ought to be filled with thankfulness, at the remembrance of his great mercy.

Q. And what, lastly, ought to be the frame of our minds respecting our neighbours?

A. We ought to be in perfect charity towards all men; forgiving others, as we desire to be forgiven at the hands of God.

Q. Will the regular observance of private, family, and public worship, the use of the sacraments, and the rite of confirmation, secure our interest in the kingdom of Heaven?

A. Not without holiness of heart and life, which it is possible, but scarcely probable, that they who are thus observant of religious duties should fail of attaining.

Q. What caution is necessary to prevent us from resting on the outward means?

A. We must remember that the end of them all, is that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

A

MORNING PRAYER,
FOR A FAMILY;

*After reading a Psalm, or short Portion of
Scripture.*

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thy sinful creatures present to thy Divine Majesty, our morning sacrifice of
praise

praise and thanksgiving for all thy goodness towards us, particularly for thy preservation of us the night past, and for bringing us safe to the beginning of this day; but above all, we praise thee for the redemption of mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hopes of glory. Lord, grant us such a sense of all thy mercies, as may make us thankful for thy loving-kindness, contented in our station, and obedient to thy will and commandments all the days of our lives.

We have sinned, O Lord, and are unworthy of the least of all thy favours; with sorrow we confess our transgressions, and humbly pray for thy grace to dispose and enable us to forsake them, and amend our lives: and whereas, through our sins, we are hindered from running the race which is set before us, we implore that mercy at thine hands, which may speedily help and deliver us.

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O God,

O God, the preserver of all that trust in thee, keep us, we beseech thee, this day and ever, under the protection of thy good providence; and above all things make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name. Teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and consider and provide for our latter end; and at our last hour spare us, O Lord, most holy, O God, most mighty; nor suffer us, through any pains of death, to fall from thee.

O Lord, we beseech thee, to keep thy household the church in continual godliness; and let not her enemies ever prevail against her. Grant that all who believe in thy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. Bless our gracious Sovereign, and all the Royal Family, and all our governors in church and state, that, through their endeavours, peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us for all generations. Be pleased to help
and

and comfort the afflicted and distressed in mind, body, or estate; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a timely deliverance from all their sorrows. Bless all all that are near and dear to us, and all who have an interest in these our unworthy prayers; and do more for us and them than we know how to ask, or are worthy to receive, except through the worthiness, and for the sake of, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord;* in whose blessed name and words, we further call upon thee, saying,

** Here insert
the Sunday
Morning
Prayer.*

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Add this on Sunday Morning.

O Lord, who hast brought us safe to the beginning of this holy day, give us grace to employ it to the purposes for which thou hast mercifully given it: in prayer and praise, in reading and hearing the word of God, in holy meditation, and in serious, innocent, and sober conversation. Grant, Lord, that we may not turn away our feet from thy courts on this thy holy day; but account the Sabbath our delight, and the duties of the Sabbath our greatest comfort and satisfaction; and may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be this day and ever acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our only Saviour and Redeemer !

AN
EVENING PRAYER,
FOR A FAMILY;

*After reading a Psalm, or a Portion of the
New Testament.*

Let us pray.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort, who art nigh unto all that call upon thee faithfully! accept, we beseech thee, this our evening sacrifice of prayer and praise; not dealing with us after our sins, nor rejecting us and our services, as our iniquities too justly deserve. Father, we have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and yet thou art never weary to do us good: this day thou hast added to the number of thy mercies, and given us new occasion to bless and praise thy holy name. Lord, make us truly sensible of, and thankful for, all thy goodness; more especially for that greatest of all thy mercies, the redemption of mankind, by the sufferings and death of thy blessed Son.

And

And humbly we beseech thee to grant that we may not, by our sinfulness, render thy mercies of no effect to our salvation; but that, living from henceforth to thy honour and glory, we may be made partakers of that happiness which thou hast purchased for us. We thank thee for the mercies of the day past in particular, wherein we have been blest with the necessities and comforts of life, and have been preserved from, or supported under, evil accidents and misfortunes; and we implore the continuance of the same protecting hand over us, and all that belong to us, this night; beseeching thee to grant us such quiet and comfortable rest, and peace, and safety, that with grateful hearts we may rise to thy service, enabled and rightly disposed to fulfil the duties of our several stations, if thou art pleased in mercy to add another day to our lives.

Lord, we beseech thee to have mercy on the whole race of mankind. Grant to thy faithful people, pardon and peace; to thy
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church, unity and love, and a daily addition to it of such as shall be saved. Grant the King a long life and happy reign over us; to his Royal Family, the blessings of the present life, and of that which is to come. To all his ministers and magistrates grant wisdom and integrity; to the clergy, truth in their doctrines, and holiness in their lives; to those that are in sin, repentance and better minds; to those that are in error, direction and conviction, to the acknowledgement and practice of the truth. To all that are in adversity, grant comfort and relief; to those that are in prosperity, an humble and grateful sense of thy mercy, and of their dependance upon thee; to all our relations and friends give such a measure of thy blessings, as is really best for them. Pardon our enemies, and give us grace to forgive them as freely as we desire to be forgiven at the last day.

These prayers and praises we humbly offer to the throne of grace in behalf of ourselves,
and

and of all mankind, in the name, and through the mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour,* who, knowing all our wants, and having compassion on all our infirmities, hath taught and commanded us thus to pray :

** Here add
the Prayer
for Sunday
Evening.*

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Add

Add this on Sunday Evening.

We desire unfeignedly to praise thy name, O God! for the gracious opportunity afforded us of presenting ourselves before thee this day, in the place set apart for thy worship and service. We have offered our services of prayer and praise; but we reflect with sorrow on the imperfections which have accompanied our best performances. O! be pleased to accept our unworthy sacrifice; and be not extreme to mark what is done amiss, for the sake of him in whose name we have prayed, and on whose merits we rely for pardon and acceptance. Prosper, we beseech thee, the endeavours of thy ministers, who have rightly divided the word of truth; and grant that every good instruction, delivered by them this day, may not only sound in the ear, but sink deep into the heart, and become the favour of life to their hearers. Grant, that every ordinance which hath been administered may be effectual to promote the salvation of such as have been
partakers

partakers of it, and have a blessed influence on their hearts and lives. And for ourselves, grant, that, as we have been taught how we ought to walk and to please God, we may continue to do so unto our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE END.

